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Viewing cable 06TELAVIV3079, ISRAEL FM LIVNI SAYS ISRAEL DISAPPROVES OF CURRENT

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06TELAVIV3079	2006-08-08 08:36	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Tel Aviv

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null
Carol X Weakley 08/08/2006 04:49:20 PM From DB/Inbox: Carol X Weakley

Cable
Text:

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 03079

SIPDIS
CXTelA:
ACTION: POL
INFO: AMB AID ADM RSO CONS IPSC PD IMO RES ECON DCM
DAO

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:RHJONES
DRAFTED: POL:MCKEAYS
CLEARED: DCM:GACRETZ, POL:NOLSEN

VZCZCTVI676
OO RUEHC RUEHLB RUEHFR RUEHNO RUCNDT

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ZNY SSSSS ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5433
INFO RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 0693
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 8795
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 0140
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 3850

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 TEL AVIV 003079

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA, IO/UNP, L

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/07/2016

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL FM LIVNI SAYS ISRAEL DISAPPROVES OF CURRENT
DRAFT OF UN RESOLUTION

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

SUMMARY

1. (S) In their August 6 meeting, Israeli FM Tzipi Livni told NEA Assistant Secretary David Welch that Israel could not approve of the draft UN resolution in its current form. Making impassioned, emotional appeals, she more than once put forward the following reasons:

-- In Israel's view, the resolution leads to negotiations over Shebaa Farms, a territory disputed between Syria and Lebanon. Livni asserted that the international community has no right to make Israel a party to the dispute, and make Shebaa Farms an irritant in the Israel-Lebanon bilateral relationship. Livni also asserted that -- if the resolution were approved -- Lebanon would press first for a resolution of Shebaa Farms at the expense of all other matters for resolution. In this case, Livni said, Lebanon would get what it wants, fail to follow through on anything else, and Hizballah aggression would be rewarded.

-- In Israel's view, the draft resolution will allow Lebanon to place conditions on its assent to the political framework envisioned in operative paragraph six (OP6). She suggested that a weak Lebanese government will make its agreement conditional on something that Israel would not be able to accept, and thereby shift the international community's focus onto Israel as the intransigent party.

-- In Israel's view, the two-resolution approach is flawed. As the second resolution concerning the multinational force (MNF) is, as Israel understands, almost complete, it and the first resolution should be combined.

2. (S) SUMMARY, CONTINUED: FM Livni instead strongly pushed for the draft UNSCR to call for full implementation of UNSCR 1559s and 1680 -- especially as they concern disarming militias and delimiting Lebanon's border with Syria. She stressed that Israel has no quarrel with Lebanon, and wants to see the Siniora government succeed -- if necessary with appropriate help from the international community. She argued that the international community's undertakings need to recognize and focus on the fact that the conflict started when Hizballah attacked Israel from Lebanon's territory. The conflict, she asserted, is between Hizballah and its backers, and Israel -- not between Lebanon and Israel. FM Livni also expressed disappointment at the news that France has been tapped to organize and lead the multinational force (MNF) envisioned to enter southern Lebanon after a cease-fire. She repeatedly probed for information on what the Europeans -- and EU High Representative Solana -- were doing to comprise an MNF, and wondered aloud if NATO is considering whether to deploy the NATO Response Force (NRF) to the region. Assistant Secretary Welch briefed FM Livni on his meetings in

Lebanon. END SUMMARY.

ISRAEL REJECTS MAKING Shebaa FARMS AN ISRAEL-LEBANON ISSUE

13. (S) With media representatives present, FM Livni opened the meeting by cautioning everyone not to believe what the newspapers write: "Israel is not satisfied with the draft UN resolution as it stands." After the media reps departed the room, Livni reiterated to the Assistant Secretary that Israel -- like Lebanon -- does not approve of the current draft of the resolution. Over the next hour and a half, FM Livni made repeated, impassioned appeals to the Assistant Secretary not to allow the draft UN resolution to address the long-standing Shebaa Farms territorial dispute. First, she argued that Shebaa Farms is a territorial dispute between Lebanon and Syria. As such, Israel has no right to be involved in it, and does not wish to have it placed on its bilateral agenda with Lebanon. She argued that IF/IF Shebaa Farms were returned to Lebanon in any kind of post-conflict resolution -- and Israel were implicated in the return -- then Syria might attack Israel, arguing that Israel had no right to hand the territory over to Lebanon.

14. (S) FM Livni also returned to what she said were the GOI's initial objections to addressing the Shebaa Farms issue in the first place -- that return of any disputed territory as part of a resolution to the current conflict would be tantamount to rewarding aggression. Hizballah, she claimed, would grow stronger, and terrorists in the region would be emboldened, perceiving that their aggression had paid dividends. Asking for five minutes to lay out the Israeli position on Shebaa Farms, Livni continued: "In past discussions between Israel and the U.S., it was clear that Shebaa Farms would be the end of a process -- full implementation of (UNSCR) 1559. Now, it is being put as something to start with! I am so fed up with weak leaders who want to get something good without implementing their deals." She wondered aloud what would happen next -- perhaps Hizballah would press for return of the West Bank? Pounding the table, Livni said, "Surely the U.S. and other Western governments are not naive enough to believe Hizballah's statements that it exists because of Shebaa Farms. Iran is the reason why Hizballah exists. Iran, Syria, the Palestinians and Hamas are watching us. We will be sending the wrong message. They will see that they get something by killing Israelis. I do not care about Siniora's 'blah blah' about how this is something for him. If Shebaa Farms are returned to Lebanon, Hizballah will merely take up another cause. It exists solely to advocate for and execute the destruction of Israel. This is about our existence, not Shebaa Farms. Shebaa Farms is a Syria-Israel conflict. I ask you, do not lead us to a situation where the end of this conflict becomes a victory for Hizballah."

15. (S) Pressed by the Assistant Secretary to address Israel's specific concerns with the language, Livni repeatedly returned to operative paragraph six (OP 6 -- which she claimed places obligations on Israel to resolve issues that previously were to be resolved by Lebanon) and operative paragraph seven (OP 7) in the draft text, which she said envisions the UN Secretary General securing assent from Lebanon and Israel for a political framework. Livni explained that Israel's fear is that the return of Shebaa Farms is perceived by the government of Lebanon as part of the political framework. Israel envisions a worst-case scenario in which Lebanon conditions its assent to the political framework on Israeli fulfillment of something that it cannot fulfill -- or worse, the return of Shebaa Farms. In this case, Israel would appear to be the intransigent party. One could, she said, imagine a scenario in which Shebaa Farms were returned, and then the weak Siniora government decides not to take action on any of its "obligations," including complete execution of UNSCR 1559. Livni summarized -- Lebanon gets something for nothing. Hizballah -- which started this war -- is rewarded for aggression. Israel is hereafter saddled with obligations

based on a war that it did not start.

16. (S) Livni stressed that prior to the outbreak of the fighting, there was a series of UNSCRs that concerned Lebanon: 425 (Israel's withdrawal behind a UN-mandated line), 1559 (disarmament of militias) and 1680 (calling on Syria to delimit its borders with Lebanon). Accepting Assistant Secretary Welch's clarification that expectations laid out in 1559 were not "obligations" set on Lebanon's government, Livni nonetheless argued that it needs to be made clear that the conflict has evolved out of unfulfilled resolutions calling for action by countries in the region other than Israel. Israel, she asserted, has executed all that it has been called upon to do in the resolutions. It should not, she stressed, be burdened with any actions as the result of a conflict that it did not initiate. "The way to resolve this conflict," she said, "is to return to 1680. If the government of Lebanon does not want it, then tough luck! We need to refer to full implementation of 1680. We want you to agree to the idea that Shebaa Farms will be dealt with only after 1559 is fully implemented."

ISRAEL DOES NOT LIKE 1ST RESOLUTION; USING TWO RESOLUTIONS

17. (S) Livni also wondered aloud why the U.S. and France had decided on a process involving two UNSC resolutions -- the first calling for a cease-fire, and the second mandating the insertion of a multinational force (MNF) into southern Lebanon. If Israel understood correctly that 90 percent of the second resolution had already been composed, Livni wondered why the U.S. would not just combine the two resolutions together. She complained that separating the two left the process open-ended, starting with a cease-fire that could ultimately prove indefinite -- a return to the status quo ante. Livni stressed that Israel is "willing to give the keys" to the MNF, and is not trying to buy more time for the IDF: "We do not need more time to allow our forces to be attacked by Hizballah. From the beginning, we have said we are willing to leave Lebanon. We do not, however, want to face another UNIFIL again."

18. (S) Assistant Secretary Welch clarified that the first resolution calls for a cessation of hostilities -- something considerably different than a cease-fire. He confessed that he did not have any details to share on the MNF itself, noting only his understanding that France has taken upon itself the role of organizing whatever MNF eventually enters southern Lebanon. As for the step-by-step nature of the process, the Assistant Secretary explained that potential troop contributors to the MNF needed to have Israel's and Lebanon's commitment to the framework political agreement before their governments could consider assigning forces to the MNF. No country, he said, could be expected to place its troops in southern Lebanon without the consent of the parties to their presence. He added that raising an MNF takes time, and noted that France postponed the first meeting of the force generation conference that was scheduled to take place in New York earlier in the week. Responding to the FM's re-statement that Israel would prefer one resolution and the opportunity to "insert more details" regarding the arms embargo, the MNF's rules of engagement and the Syria-Lebanon border, the Assistant Secretary stressed that re-opening the matter posed greater danger than continuing with the current process.

A/S WELCH BRIEFS LIVNI ON HIS MEETINGS IN LEBANON

19. (S) The Assistant Secretary shared with Livni the results of his August 4-5 meetings in Lebanon with PM Siniora, former economy minister Marwan Hamadi, Druze leader Walid Jumblat; the UNSYG's Personal Rep, Geir Pederson; Lebanese Parliamentary Speaker Nabi Berri, and Maronite leader Natal Malawi. Stressing that he had met with representatives from all of Lebanon's confessions, the Assistant Secretary

characterized the meetings as very professional. Specifically, he told FM Livni that:

-- Berri sees himself as able to represent Shia interests, and is willing, but does not feel obligated, to do so. He is providing considerable help to PM Siniora, who relies upon him to keep the Shia in line with the GOL. Berri indicated his willingness to be an intermediary to Hizballah.

-- Lebanon's Druze are plugged into all the issues and assert that a Shia figure needs to take the lead to stop the conflict. The Maronites as a group are more divided in their views, but are more anti-Hizballah, anti-Syria and anti-Iran than the other confessions.

-- Jumblat claimed that the IDF is not making much headway against Hizballah and needs to keep up pressure on the group. All of the Assistant Secretary's interlocutors understood that it is helpful to have Hizballah "militarily pressured."

-- His Lebanese interlocutors had reached a common view on reparations. They also asked for U.S. help on reconstructing bridges.

-- All of his interlocutors shared a common view on Shebaa Farms, including the importance of the issue and the view that its resolution would deprive Hizballah of its claim for its resistance. All want to see Shebaa Farms returned as part of a political change and victory over Hizballah. They do not need all of the territory returned, and they do not want delimitation, as this would give Syria a veto. They do not insist that Lebanon control the returned territory, or that all Lebanese displaced persons and refugees return. They would agree to full demilitarization of the returned portion. All agreed on the seven points contained in the Lebanese cabinet's understanding. All expect a specific proposal from Israel regarding withdrawal.

-- All of his interlocutors perceive that the international community is pressuring Lebanon to make peace with Israel. The Lebanese want an armistice agreement to provide them cover so that they can carry out any undertakings with Israel. Progress has been made on the principles of an armistice. If the Lebanese can obtain the principles and elements that they desire, they would quickly agree. They do not like the draft resolution in its current form as it does not address withdrawal. (NOTE: The Assistant Secretary stressed that he might have more influence on the Lebanese if he could return to them with withdrawal language acceptable to Israel. END NOTE.)

-- Like the Israelis, the Lebanese are not happy with the lead role France has appointed itself in organizing the MNF.

-- All said that they cannot ask for or approve a multinational force under a Chapter 7 mandate, but can accept one if it is imposed on Lebanon. They are planning for the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) immediately upon withdrawal of the IDF -- even if the MNF is not yet in place. Berri implied that Hizballah would agree, and volunteered to personally lead a vanguard of 10,000-15,000 troops into the south. All shared the Israeli view that there should be no space between Phases One and Two. The Lebanese view, however, is that as long as the IDF remains in Lebanon, it should expect the fight to continue. All of the Assistant Secretary's interlocutors preferred that the IDF withdraw right away, and noted that the growing plight of displaced persons increases the scope for Iranian and Syrian interference. PM Siniora has been in touch with potential Islamic troop contributors -- including Malaysia and Indonesia -- and wants the bulk of Muslim MNF troops to be Sunni.

-- All accept that there should be no arms in the area of operations except those held by the LAF and MNF. They accept the responsibility to stop weapons re-supply, and are willing to accept some UNIFIL role in monitoring this. (NOTE: FM Livni responded that "This is most important for Israel right

now." END NOTE.)

-- All agreed that Iran and Syria want to continue the fight.

-- All of his interlocutors were very realistic on the prisoner issue. They want to see it referred to in the draft resolution, but will not make their agreement to the resolution conditional on it. Responding to Livni, the Assistant Secretary said that he had no more information on the condition of the Israeli soldiers being held prisoner. He recounted that PM Siniora had told him that right after their abduction, he had been told that they were safe and "out of the South." Siniora had also said very empathetic things about how prisoners would be cared for under Islamic law.

¶10. (S) The Assistant Secretary said that the USG's goal is to aim for a vote on the draft resolution on August 8, and that Secretary Rice would relocate to New York the evening of August 7 in support of that aim. FM Livni wondered aloud whether Israel or Lebanon could alter the timetable. The Assistant Secretary replied that UNSYG Annan would likely press ahead, notwithstanding any Lebanese or Israeli reservations.

¶11. (C) The U.S. side was represented by Assistant Secretary Welch, State Deputy Legal Adviser Jonathan Schwartz, Ambassador Richard H. Jones, DCM Gene Cretz, and Pol-Mil Officer Michael Keays (notetaker). The Israeli side was led by Foreign Minister Livni and included her Chief of Staff, Daniel Pinhasi, MFA Director General Aharon Abramovich and MFA Adviser Tal Becker.

¶12. (U) This cable was cleared by NEA Assistant Secretary David Welch.

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JONES